

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of this application in view of the above amendments and the following remarks is respectfully requested.

Applicants appreciate the courtesies extended to Applicants representative during the personal interview held April 7, 2010. Applicant's statement of substance of the personal interview is incorporated into the above amendments and following remarks.

Claims 12-22 are pending in this application. Claims 15-22 are withdrawn from consideration. By this amendment, Claim 12 is amended; and no claims are canceled or added herewith. It is respectfully submitted that no new matter is added by this amendment.

In the Outstanding Office Action, Claim 12 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by JP 2003-62832 to Seko; and Claims 13-14 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Seko in view of JP 49024286 to Babel.

It is respectfully submitted the applied art does not teach or suggest that after the vulcanization processing, the bladder, in the expanded state, removes the vulcanized tire from the vulcanization position to the delivery position, and contracting the bladder at the delivery position for releasing the vulcanized tire from the bladder, as recited in Claim 12.

As discussed in [0051] of the present publication, the bladder 45 can be moved from the vulcanization position to the delivery position LP being kept in an expansion state. Accordingly, the bladder 45 is operable as loading/removing device for the tire which transfers a green tire to be vulcanized from the delivery position LP to the vulcanization position and removes the vulcanized tire from the vulcanized position to return it to the delivery position.

In contrast, Seko discusses in paragraph [0039] that once the vulcanization is complete, the fluid in the bladder is discharged to the outside and the upper mold is raised. The finished vulcanized tire is removed from the upper mold 25, lower mold 18 and bladder

centering mechanism 17 using a transport device that is not shown, and the process is complete. As such, after completion of the vulcanization, the bladder is contracted, but does not work to remove the finished vulcanized tire from the upper mold, lower mold and bladder centering mechanism. The finished vulcanized tire is removed from the vulcanization position by using a transport device. That is, in Seko, the transport device has to grip the easy-to-deform finished vulcanized tire in the lower mold and has to take it out of the lower mold. The bladder is not a part of this operation as the bladder has already been contracted.

According to the features of one or more embodiments of the present invention, it becomes possible to remove the vulcanized tire from the vulcanization position to the delivery position without deforming the vulcanized tire. As well known in the art, the vulcanized tire at the vulcanization position is still easy to deform, and therefore, the removal of the vulcanized tire from the vulcanization position has to be careful until it is fixed by being subjected to a post cure inflation processing which follows the vulcanizing processing. One or more examples of the present invention enable the bladder to move the vulcanized tire from the vulcanization position to the delivery position where it becomes easy for a handling device to hold or hug the outer circumferential surface of the easy-to-deform vulcanized tire just removed from the vulcanization position. Thus, it can be realized for the handling device to transfer the easy-to-deform vulcanized tire from the delivery position to a next step such as, for example, a post cure inflation processing without deforming the easy-to-deform vulcanized tire.

With respect to independent Claim 13, it is respectfully submitted that the applied art does not teach or suggest making a single centering shaft pass through centers of the lower mold, the upper mold, the green tire, the bladder and the pair of bladder operating sleeves during a vulcanization by extending the single centering shaft from the upper mold into the pair of bladder operating sleeves.

Seko does not disclose a single centering shaft as recited nor does the Office Action assert as such. Applicants further submit that the applied art of Babel also fails to disclose a single centering shaft which is made to pass through the centers of the pair of bladder operating sleeves, as recited in Claim 13. Applicants first note that the Office Action cites to element 29R of Babel for showing the single centering shaft. However, Applicants note that the specification and drawings of Babel do not indicate an element 29R. Assuming arguendo that the Office Action intended to assert piston rod 33 as the centering shaft, Applicants submit that the piston rod 33 also does not correspond to the centering shaft as claimed.

Specifically, in Babel, piston rod 33 corresponds to one of the pair of bladder operating sleeves as claimed. The piston rod 33 and sleeve 22 together correspond in function to the pair of bladder operating sleeves, as claimed in Claim 13. As discussed on pages 9-12 and as shown in steps of Figs. 1-8, the piston 38 is supported by rod 33 and passes through the center hole of cover 29 extending in the direction of cylinder 34. A sleeve 22 is installed so as to slide in the axial direction within lower chamber 1. During vulcanization, the piston is moved to the upper position shown in Fig. 2 so as to insert the tube into the tire material.

As such, Babel does not cure the deficiencies of Seko. Again, Claim 13 recites in part making a single centering shaft pass through centers of the lower mold, the upper mold, the green tire, the bladder and the pair of bladder operating sleeves during a vulcanization by extending the single centering shaft from the upper mold into the pair of bladder operating sleeves, and performing the vulcanization processing with the single centering shaft centering the pair of bladder operating sleeves relative to the lower mold and the upper mold. These features are not taught by the applied art either alone or in combination.

In accordance with the features of the claimed invention discussed above, the single centering shaft makes it possible to bring all of the lower mold, the upper mold, the green

tire, the bladder and the pair of bladder operating sleeves into axial alignment, so that the uniformity and roundness of the tire can be improved. The features of the claimed invention are not taught by the applied art and therefore the applied art cannot provide at least the advantages discussed above. Claim 14 depends from Claim 13. Therefore, it is believed that Claim 14 is patentable for the same reasons discussed above.

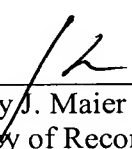
Withdrawal of the rejections of the claims under 35 U.S.C. § 102 and § 103 over Seko and Babel is respectfully requested.

Consequently, for the reasons discussed in detail above, no further issues are believed to be outstanding in the present application, and the present application is believed to be in condition for formal allowance. Therefore, a Notice of Allowance is earnestly solicited.

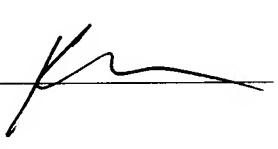
Should the Examiner deem that any further action is necessary to place this application in even better form for allowance, the Examiner is encouraged to contact the undersigned representative at the below listed telephone number.

Respectfully submitted,

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